



# PREVENTION TALK

## MEDIA SMART

Issue Number 10

CSAP'S WESTERN CENTER FOR THE APPLICATION OF PREVENTION TECHNOLOGIES  
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A 1996 study showed children are more familiar with Budweiser's television frogs than Kellogg's Tony the Tiger or Smokey the Bear.<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds of parents say that seeing and hearing alcohol advertisements make teens more likely to drink.<sup>2</sup> "Parents get it that alcohol companies' ads are not helping them teach their children about the risks of alcohol use," said Jim O'Hara, Executive Director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University.

In our schools and communities, there are many anti-alcohol ad campaigns aimed at keeping young people from drinking. However, mainstream music, movies, and television send them other messages. Media often glamorizes and normalizes unhealthy behaviors. The glamorous portrayal of alcohol can encourage teens to believe drinking alcohol will help to make them popular, attractive, happy, and "cool."<sup>3</sup>

### REMEMBER:

*When it comes to helping kids understand the consequences of substance abuse, never underestimate the power you have as a parent.<sup>2</sup>*

For more information call:

Listed below are a few ideas to try at home with your teen to help your family become media smart.

### ACTION STEPS:

- Know what movies and television shows your teen is watching and to what music he/she is listening.
- Take the time to watch and listen with your teen. This can provide an opportunity to talk about the consequences of alcohol use.
- Watch an alcohol ad and discuss how the media uses its influence through music, special effects, and/or editing to sell the product.
- Plan activities that do not involve media. Get outside and get active.

### TO THINK ABOUT:

- As a parent you have tremendous influence over your teen and his/her decision to drink alcohol.
- The more of a role model parents are, the less impact the media will have on the mind of the teen.<sup>2</sup>
- Media are important to young people for both communication and expression. Find positive ways to enjoy media with your teen.

### SOURCES:

- 1 Yamhill County Health and Human Services. (2003, April). *Talk About Tuesday*. McMinnville, Oregon: Author.
- 2 Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. (2003). *New survey shows parents troubled by underage drinking and alcohol companies' advertising practices*. Retrieved July 19, 2004 from <http://www.camy.org/press/release.php?ReleaseID=13>.
- 3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office on Smoking and Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Education Association Health Information Network. (Producers). (1999). *Media sharp: Analyzing tobacco & alcohol messages*. (Videotape). Washington DC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Publications Department at 770.488.5122.)